Written by Michael Woods
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David Haye talked a stellar game to get to the main event at Imtech Arena in Hamburg on Saturday night. He lured Wladimir Klitschko into a bout that will be his IRA, with a three year masterful campaign of trash talking. But when it came to time to walk the walk, he came up empty. Haye boxed smartly from a defensive standpoint, but didn't throw enough punches to get a decision, or much respect from most anyone who watched this lackluster exercise. Wlad too deserves if not scorn, then meager appreciation. He fought in a robotic fashion, had a hard time finding the mobile Haye, but probably deserved the decision because he threw more. After twelve rounds of "action" the judges saw it 117-109, 118-108, 116-110, for Wlad.

Haye went 72-290, a pathetic volume, while Wlad went 134-509.

HBO showed the bout, which was nearly cancelled because it was raining in Hamburg all day long, and the arena does not have a retractable roof. Some might joke that they would've preferred a rainout. Haye tried to follow the same blueprint he used to win the title against Nicolay Valuev to beat Wlad; he raised his hands after, and seemed to think he won. I gave him credit during the first half of the event, as his mobility and head movement gave Wlad trouble, but didn't frustrate the big man, who has an amazing reserve of discipline. Wlad said to Larry Merchant after Haye was hard to hit, and was excessively cautious. He wanted a KO, he said, and realized the fight wasn't that exciting. The winner didn't back off on his disdain of Haye for being classless in his trash talking. "I wished that I could knock him out impressively," he said. "He was scared to fight me. I was expecting more challenge in the ring. He was super defensive." And how much longer will he fight? He said he was psyched to collect all the belts, and wasn't jazzed by his performance, so he will continue. Merchant then talked to Haye. Haye said he was "subpar, nowhere near as good as he would've liked." He said he broke a toe in his right foot three weeks ago, was receiving local anaesthetics, and had to cut sparring early. "I was unable to push off my right foot and land my Hayemaker," he said, and took off his show and sock as proof. More sound than fury, then? "I gave it the best I could. I wasn't one hundred percent healthy, but that happens in boxing, I don't know what he might had for injuries in that fight for all I know."

The IBF-WBO champion Klitschko (6-6; age 35; born in Ukraine, resides in Germany and USA; 55-3 entering) weighed 242.6 pounds on Friday, while the WBA champion Haye (6-0; age 33; from England; 25-1 entering) was 212.8 pounds.

Jim Lampley called the action, along with Larry Merchant, and Roy Jones, subbing for Manny Steward, who was cornering Wladimir. Haye took his time making his way to the ring, and word filtered that he wasn’t ready to leave the dressing room, for no specified reason. His guys put booties on him before he walked to the ring, when he finally did exit his dressing room, after a delay of fifteen or so minutes. He had to make his way through a scrum of punters as his team of security shoved people out of the way. Wlad then made his way to the ring, after we saw a little theatre. Wlad talked smack on a video screen as “theatregoers” watched on a set. We saw a ring, then a street scene, where brother Vitali sat on a park bench, next to George Foreman. Let the record show it was inventive, and damned entertaining. Fireworks shot, and then Foreman collected Wlad, who walked to the ring. After the the anthems, and the stats, and Buwe got down to business. Ade Byrd, Stan Christadoulu and Mike Pernick were the judges.

In the first, Haye moved laterally and threw few left hooks. Wlad threw him down and the crowd roared. The little brother was cautious early. He warmed up with a minute left, but it was a Haye round.

In the second, Haye’s movement was working. The Wlad jab was mostly errant. He used his right earlier than he typically does, and he won the second half of the round, and probably the round itself.

In the third, Haye was staying closer to Wlad. He landed a sharp right at 2:10, and his fans roared. Haye was getting more confident, and moving less. He ate a couple on the ropes, but took the frame. You got to step to him a little bit more, the fight could be going either way, I don't know," Steward said after.

In the fourth, Haye's head movement was sharp. Both men posed and feinted a lot. Merchant complained about the lack of action. A Haye right sent Wlad back late, and may have given Haye the round in a weak frame. Haye grinned in his corner as he received instructions from trainer Adam Booth

In the fifth, Wlad was busier early, with the jab. A meaningful right told Haye Wlad could crack. He then threw Haye down to the mat for the third time, after absorbing a right hand. Haye was in soccer flop mode. Wlad got the session. Haye had landed just 36 shots through 5, to Wlad's 51. Manny told his guy to get busier after the round.

In the sixth, Haye went to the mat as Wlad leaned on him. A mouse appeared under Wlad's left eye, for the record. Haye boxed smartly and dictated the tone.Where were the combos from Wlad? He was far too cautious.

In the seventh, the ref took a point from Wlad for throwing Haye down. Bad call, in my opinion. Haye again boxed smartly, moving, every now and again sticking. Wlad didn't press Haye enough, and Haye's mobility got him out of trouble when Wlad did.

In the eighth, the action was weak. Neither man deserved the frame.Steward told Wlad to fire the left hook, and that Haye was tired.he didn't look tired.

In the ninth, a right hand lead scored for Haye. Wlad missed with most everything. He did land a right, but it was another weak round.

In the tenth, Haye threw even less than usual. A right by cautious Wlad landed. Merchant termed Haye a disgrace by this point.

In the 11th, Wlad scored a knockdown, when he threw down Haye, who helped the cause by flopping.

In the 12th, Haye landed a sharp right, and Wlad held. Finally, Wlad woke up, and got fiery. Then he went back to his regular measured, bloodless style. We'd go to the cards.I gave Haye a lot of the early rounds, for smart boxing, but can see if folks didn't, because he didn't act in an even semi aggressive fashion.

SPEEDBAG

Steward talked with Merchant before the bout, and said he hoped the fight would take place. He said he wanted Wlad to start quick, and get ahead, in case the action was stopped because of the weather. Manny said the wet canvas would hurt Wlad more than Haye, because Wlad moves his feet more than the Brit does. Jones disagreed with Manny, saying Haye would be

hurt by the wet canvas, because Haye has to plant to reach the taller man. Then, Roy reversed course, saying the wetness would give Haye a better chance to land a Hayemaker.

Comment on this article

mortcola says:

Haye was the ultra-cautious one. Wlad was too measured, but effective. Kind of dull. Not much to say this time. Just wondering, is Haye still gonna retire after this lousy effort? No glory, not much guts, barely averaged 20 punches thrown a round, sliding, twitching, leaping, flopping, looking to the ref for help again and again?

Condor says:

We won't see this one on ESPN Classic in future years. A real yawner.

The opening pageantry was more entertaining than the fight. Alas, this confirmed my belief that Haye was more media creation and HOPEFUL contender than a bona fide prizefighter. He simply hadn't done anything at heavyweight to garner the fierce reputation he had with many. I still contend that Adamek is superior to Haye (although too undersized and without the requisite pop to beat a K). But Adamek is a prizefighter. As for Haye retiring, it makes sense. Nobody is eager to see this guy again. He's an inferior, safety first, and completely one dimensional heavyweight. There's nowhere for him to go. He made his money, duped the public, and my guess is he goes on to other pursuits.

brownsugar says:

I thought Emmanuel Stewart was going to lose it as he seemed to be getting frustrated with Wlad after the first 2 rounds..... but he remained composed after he saw that WK was at least getting the nod for most of the rounds.. WK allowed Haye to fight at his own liesurely pace... even when Hayes back was against the ropes,.. and his hands down by his sides.. WK would only inch forward hesitantly allowing Haye to catch his breath and fight a survivalist-styled battle to the final bell. I was hoping WK was going to put some serious pressure on Haye... since Haye was only landing about half a dozen memorable punches and didn't seem capable of going the distance if WK turned up the heat(if Haye couldnt get the KO then I was hoping WK could do it).. that way at least WK could stay on HBO... but this was remeniscient of an Ibrigamov-type performance so it's hard to say...We may have to go back to paying the $15 Kbothers website fee again..... dang!..... Haye did try throwing some wild hayemakers to get back into the fight... stood in front of Klits with his hands down around his waist and made him look stiffer and more robotic than usual... but he couldn't overcome the size difference...Wlads defense.. or his own sense of self preservation. The fight would have been much more entertaining if I'd made it to the liquor store before it started.

brownsugar says:

Another thing,.. what was with all the flopping... and what fighter shows up at the post fight interview missing a shoe??? shoulda brought a note from his mum as well.

brownsugar says:

Well now that I'm done semi-bashing and semi-praising WK... the only challenge I can see for the future HOF is the up and coming british Champ and former bronze medalist David Price. (ex Football player Seth Mitchell is showing promise but he's still at least 2-3 years away) Price might be ready inside 12-18 months... the kid is a giant but he's also well proportioned and well schooled... athletic and looks more "natural" for lack of a better term... don't see anything else close on the horizon... Bermane Stivrene should forgo his mandatory shot with either Klits Brother and go back to developing some endurance. Now the K brothers have 4 belts... love him or hate him... it's a fantastic achievement.

mortcola says:

Hey Brownsugar. 1: Stivrene is a terrible fighter. Ray F-in' Austin made him look like a turnip with legs until the KO. 2: Difference between style and substance - people call Wlad "stiff and robotic", but that is just looks; the guy has the best upper body movement and set-up for his punches of nearly any heavyweight you can name. Perfect spacing, timing, anticipation, little adjustments to the head and shoulders and foot angles. Efficient and effective, so much so that NO ONE CAN LAND more than the occasional shot on him. Watch the tape: Wlad is right in front of his man at all times, but no one can hit him. You want dancing, Youtube Soul Train or DWTS. This is efficient, overwhelmingly effective boxing. Yeah, boring, too - I, too, wish he pushed it more. Tough. You still get an 86% KO percentage. Not exactly Malignaggi territory.

amayseng says:

[QUOTE=mortcola;7640]Hey Brownsugar. 1: Stivrene is a terrible fighter. Ray F-in' Austin made him look like a turnip with legs until the KO. 2: Difference between style and substance - people call Wlad "stiff and robotic", but that is just looks; the guy has the best upper body movement and set-up for his punches of nearly any heavyweight you can name. Perfect spacing, timing, anticipation, little adjustments to the head and shoulders and foot angles. Efficient and effective, so much so that NO ONE CAN LAND more than the occasional shot on him. Watch the tape: Wlad is right in front of his man at all times, but no one can hit him. You want dancing, Youtube Soul Train or DWTS. This is efficient, overwhelmingly effective boxing. Yeah, boring, too - I, too, wish he pushed it more. Tough. You still get an 86% KO percentage. Not exactly Malignaggi territory.[/QUOTE]

ya no one can land much on him because he he is too distant to even land his own

shots..

seriously, he missed and missed and missed haye all night.. i gave wlad the W but

he didnt land as many shots as the troubled compubox scored...

haye should have gone left hook to the body all night then crept upstairs..

wlad did NOT THROW ONE BODY SHOT ALL FIGHT

not one....

i was very disappointed

the hw division is an embarrassment today

brownsugar says:

Morcola.... I'm making some objective comments about the esthetics,.. no doubt WK earned his victory. I do respect WK,.. he's a gentleman and I thought his pre-ring-walk video with Ali was one of the classiest tributes ever paid to the ex-champ. However I did notice some liabilities... Hayes movement really bothered him,.. but to WK's credit, he eventually got used to Haye's right hand,... which happens to one handed fighters. The term "robotic" is not meant to discredit WK... they used to call Tommy Hearns a robot too... probably a side effect of the Kronk School.

brownsugar says:

Overall I would grade WK's performance a C (and Haye had something to do with that)...neither fighter lived up to thier prefight claims.. Haye didn't decapitate WK ....and WK didn't punish Haye as promised. Stewart kept trying to get WK to rip the left hook, and throw body shots... either could have ended the fight. I don't expect WK to be the second coming of George Foreman, however I hope gains the confidence to use his advantages in more productive ways..... anyhow congrats to WK for the win..... now we wait.

Shoulder Roll Defense says:

Pathetic, pathetic, pathetic, pathetic! I could write a book on whats wrong with boxing and the heavyweight division would be a very lengthy chapter. I give Wlad very little credit and I can't wait for Teddy Atlas' analysis on "Friday Night Fights" next week on ESPN. Haye has the athleticism to beat Wlad, which is one of the reasons Wlad wasn't really able to ever hit him flush. However, his skills are terrible and he fought like an amateur lunging in with punches off balance. He is shorter than Wlad, but had a slight reach advantage according to the tale of the tape on HBO. If the tale of the tape is accurate, why didn't he jab to close the distance in order to get on the inside and do work. He slipped punches very well, but he is a terrible counterpuncher. My son is three years old and he can counterpunch as well as Haye lol. Add Haye's lack of skills to his lack of killer instinct and you have a fighter that was in over his head. I agree with "amayseng," Haye should have been slipping punches, cutting off the ring, and working the body (Boxing 101).

Compared to other combat sports, boxing is in dire need of quality trainers and teachers of the sport. There are too many professionals that have fundamental flaws and fighters like Haye and Pascal are perfect examples of this. A journeyman from the late 80s and early 90s such as James "Buster" Douglas would have given Wlad fits. The fact that the Klitschko brothers are dominating the division is more of a testament about how bad the talent and skill level of the division is currently. Wlad looked just as bad as Haye tonight. The only difference is that he was in Germany and the HBO commentators, with the exception of Roy Jones, seemed very biased and pro Wlad.

Condor says:

It takes two to tango. Haye was SO ultra defensive that it was impossible for Klitschko to look good. He lunged and lurched and twitched. You can't really blame Klitschko for that. This was a guy unwilling to engage (a fact we all knew coming in, just had to look at the dreadful Valuev fight). Haye is a notch below Bruce Seldon, historically. Both Klitschkos are all time greats. It's simply fact. We're in 2011, and these guys are unbeatable. We can malign their opposition but it's a hollow attack. If these guys were so fragile, someone would step up and say screw it, I'll knock him out, pick up 8 figures, and enter the history books. But no one can do it.

I'm watching the replay now on HBO. They did a hell of a job honoring the ex-champs. It was a great show prior to the fight (sadly).

Radam G says:

Excuses are like arses, everybody has one. First! I didn't see, and I won't ever watch the heavyweight bum-and-chump fest of the year. Broke toe, sore foot, WTF! Apparently nowadays, these New Jack trainers don't know syet about foot training, conditioning and protection. Ain't gonna pi$$ on Doc WK's bum parade. He has an old-school trainer -- GBG Manny S working with him. You can lead ang kabayo sa lawa, but you cannot make him drink. YOU HEARD!

@B-Sug, GBG Manny S is high-strung like that. He never loses his cool. He just blow fire to get the pugilist off that arse and busy. I heard how GBG Manny S was blowing that fire to get the ex-USSR Red Army doctor jiggy. Because when it comes to throwing punches ole Doc Ironfist will never get piggy. Holla!

brownsugar says:

I hear you Radam G-Man, there's only one MP****** Very polarizing Fighter... whenever Klitschko's name comes up you can bet the debate will be catching fire. I think there's valid points on both sides of the argument, and I don't feel the need to make antagonizing remarks about Wlad because he's been a very respectful and classy champ..you could tell by the post fight interview that he really tries hard to please the fans to the best of his ability. He was the clear winner hands down.. However Haye took minimum punishment and was able keep Wlad from committing to throwing the hard stuff. Usually WK lands the hard jab for a few rounds followed by few hard rights and his oponents quit on the stool or are waived off by the ref. This time WK let Haye feint and bluff his way to survival without even having to mount a bycycle.. In

the end I think a win is a win and that's all most people will remember... he's even beginning to creep up on Holmes 20 title defenses run. WK is a good enough boxer to use his size advantage against normal sized heavyweights. However I don't know how he will be able to compete with other supersized heavyweights once the rest of the division gradually catches up (size-wise)... In a few years (or less) there will be at least 4 supersized prospects... who I would love to see either KBrother fight.. Sadly(for the fans) those guys will be sipping champagne on their yatch by then. (Enjoy the 4th, pc)

Grimm says:

[QUOTE=Shoulder Roll Defense;7645]I agree with "amayseng," Haye should have been slipping punches, cutting off the ring, and working the body (Boxing 101).[/QUOTE]

So should everyone, and yet no one manages to. Wonder why that is.

[QUOTE=Shoulder Roll Defense;7645]Compared to other combat sports, boxing is in dire need of quality trainers and teachers of the sport. There are too many professionals that have fundamental flaws and fighters like Haye and Pascal are perfect examples of this.[/QUOTE]

Agree 100%, and they just seem to keep coming.

michaelabii says:

Great summary Mike. I watched the fight again early Sunday and I am now a little more cautious in judging Haye. Did he fight a couragous fight ? Obviously not. But, he fought the best fight he thought he could with the tools available to him which are essentially his right hand and in my opinion an underutilised left jab. I actually think Haye could become a useful heavyweight if he is paired up with a trainer like Manny Steward. He is very athletic much like Jean Pascal and has improved his defence quite a bit. His problem in this fight was that he had no belief in his ability to counter Vlad effectively from a short distance. He told us he would but seemed to freeze up each time Vlad stepped up to him. Vlad on the other hand seemed to freeze any time Haye hit him. Honestly, I really think the big guy has no faith in his chin which is why he instinctively ties up his man. Haye stunned Vlad on two occassions during the fight. Vlad fought aggresively but again the passion was lacking. I thought Vlad was wide open for a counter right when he opened up on Haye in the final stanza. Haye was touching Vlad with that right - a concern for me early in the fight. I really do think that if haye would have planted himself and thrown quick power right over Vlads left jab he could have gotten him out of there.

Robert Curtis says:

"Oh my toebone!" said Deputy Dawg. What a wuss. Haye will appear again for some minor payday in Europe where they must be starved for entertainment. Mortcola usually sounds so smart and plump with information about the Klits and their abundant abilities, but is quiet after this bout. The Klits do train like actual boxers who do it for a living, but they don't take many risks or care about the crowds that pay. It is a little sorry that no serious competition ever

materializes to make them look even half decent. But the Klits could be more entertaining finishers. Joe Louis would not of lasted as champ as long as he did without providing knockouts. The Klits provide nothing. The German fans must accept less. The moral of the story, ignore the heavies completely. Only big guys too lame for football venture there.

the Roast says:

I was out of town Saturday so I just watched the fight today. Yes, it was a let down. Alot of talk and not alot of action. Haye conned us. He said he was gonna KO Wlad. Did he try or when he got in the ring with the man, was the task too daunting? Wlad was just too big to get close to. Haye was overmatched. He talked his way into a big payday. He realized that he wouldnt be able to get close enough to land the big shot so he just tried to survive. He didnt run but he didnt lay it all out there. Flopping down time after time? Wlad was not blameless in the dullness. He was a little too respectful of the perceived Haye power. No body punches? I'd like to see a rematch. Haye can blame the toe injury and the wet ring. Wlad can blame the wet ring and the flopping. I did like the pomp and intros.

mortcola says:

[QUOTE=Robert Curtis;7673]"Oh my toebone!" said Deputy Dawg. What a wuss. Haye will appear again for some minor payday in Europe where they must be starved for entertainment. Mortcola usually sounds so smart and plump with information about the Klits and their abundant abilities, but is quiet after this bout. The Klits do train like actual boxers who do it for a living, but they don't take many risks or care about the crowds that pay. It is a little sorry that no serious competition ever materializes to make them look even half decent. But the Klits could be more entertaining finishers. Joe Louis would not of lasted as champ as long as he did without providing knockouts. The Klits provide nothing. The German fans must accept less. The moral of the story, ignore the heavies completely. Only big guys too lame for football venture there.[/QUOTE]

Hi Robert - Not quiet at all. here's what I wrote: You wanted more entertainment. Most people want more entertainment. But I avoid the hype and media demands whenever possible. Wladimir's career is defined. It is a very distinct and admirable career, defined by an extraordinarily high skill level matched with a post-loss strategy of minimizing risk and maximizing control of the ring activity. It also happens to have resulted in one of the highest KO percentages in history. What it has not given you and the heros-and-blood hungry public is the adrenalin you wish for. I, too, wish he had thrown the damn lead hook, dropped some rights to the sternum and ribs and followed with his excellent but underused uppercut. But, 1, he doesn't typically open that section of his toolbox until he's good and ready, and, 2, it is very, very hard to do that against a constantly running, juking, twitching fighter who is devoting 100% of his energy to defense. Wlad's connect percentage, against a completely defensive fighter with good reflexes, was perfectly understandable; he actually did better after Haye's few serious attacks, because there was something to work with. So, the whole premise of "100% Wlad's fault" is, frankly, nuts. He did exactly what he always does, which is make a supposedly dangerous fighter appear completely inept and scared. This results in boring fights. But, my logic says, the boredom makes the average guys say, boredom = he sucks and all the opponents are absolute

garbage; whereas the actual record, the actual performance in the ring, implies that Wlad manages to be both an underachiever and boring due to his risk-reduction strategy, AND be so dramatically more effective than all his opponents that there is no way to see those opponents as legitimate contenders. Remember, most of them get KTFO; it may not satisfy you, but the style results in absolute domination, even when he doesn't use all his tools. THAT is the definition of his career. It is how he will be remembered by those who are capable of objectivity and savvy in their boxing analysis. WANTING Wlad to give you a better show doesn't make it realistic to demand that he define himself some other way.

To add to it - Sam Peter, once considered the second coming of Tyson, was always a very dangerous puncher, one who nearly took Wlad out the first fight; Peter got KTFO in the rematch not only despite but BECAUSE he was in there trying to be Joe Frazier, pushing Wlad and opening himself up; much as Wlad went off on Haye after Haye nailed him, but struggled to do so when Haye was being the mole in whack-a-mole, he repeatedly punished Peter for his temerity, his attempts to get inside. This argues against the notion that Wlad is gun-shy; he does better when the opponent is on the attack, but tends to wait too long to act on the openings he himself creates - lord knows that jab gives him opportunities should he have the urge to use them.